



**MEETING SUMMARY
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION (WRAC)
LOWER WEST COAST WATER SUPPLY PLAN (LWCRWSP)
ISSUES WORKSHOP
South Florida Water Management District
Location: Ft. Myers Service Center, 2301 McGregor Boulevard
Ft. Myers, FL 33901
Wednesday, June 23, 2004**

Attendees:

Trudi Williams – Chair of LWCRWSP and SFWMD Governing Board Member

WRAC Members:

Joe Collins

Howard Wegis

Interested Parties:

Chad Gillis
Darren Murphy
Daryl Thomas
David Robson
Ed Carlson
Fred Partin
Giddy Bobeche
Jim Beever
Joan LeBeau
John Cassani

Joyce Mazourek
Karen Bickford
Kim Dryden
Maggie Mooney
Marisa Erika Morr
Matt Baxter
Michael Taylor
Pam Hayford
Paul Mattensch
Randy Edelstein

Rebecca Elliott
Rich Calabrese
Rick Dantzler
Roland Ottoliri
Ron Hamel
Scott Jones
Shaye Prather
Susan Scott
Tom Swihart

SFWMD Staff:

Terry Bengtsson
Henry Bittaker
Scott Burns
Mark Elsner

Linda Hoppes
Elliott Kambert
Barbara Kerby
John Mulliken

Michelle Percy
Beth Ross
Rick Smith
Janet Starnes

1. Welcome by Trudi Williams, Chair, Lower West Coast Water Supply Plan.

Meeting called to order at 10:15 a.m. Chair Williams provided information on the forum for today's meeting and welcomed the public to participate.

2. Introductions by John Mulliken, Deputy Department Director, Water Supply, SFWMD.

Mr. Mulliken introduced staff members in the Ft. Myers area service center and staff from the West Palm Beach office of SFWMD. He explained the divisions and projects

the staff members are involved in the planning for water supply needs. All attendees introduced themselves and stated their affiliation.

3. Proposed Process for Lower West Coast Plan Update, Michelle Pearcy, Director, Planning and Implementation Division, SFWMD.

Ms. Pearcy provided the requirements for the water supply plan. There is a 20 year planning period and a 1 in 10 level of certainty. A plan is a proactive approach to sustain future water resources for supply and natural resources. This provides a tool box of water supply resources. There are four planning regions – Kissimmee Basin, Upper East Coast, Lower East Coast, Lower West Coast and Kissimmee Basin. The existing plan updates schedule was provided.

The WRAC serves as an overall forum to gain consensus to resolve issues. There will be at least five regional planning meetings for each region. The draft plan process was reviewed. Today is the “Kick Off” meeting for the Lower West Coast Water Supply Plan and in the future there will be meetings to discuss: demographics and conservation workshop; water reuse and model methodology; modeling workshop; and multiple meetings on model alternatives; and finally a recommendation workshop.

4. Statutory Requirements of Water Supply Plans, by Beth Ross, Sr. Specialist Attorney, Office of Counsel, SFWMD.

Ms. Ross presented information on the legal aspects of regional water supply plans. There was landmark legislation in 1997 – House Bill 715. The focus of the bill was to address effective development and implementation of water management district water supply mission. This is extremely important. This plan will identify shortfalls and alternative solutions. The plans will be implemented (and will not sit on a shelf).

The plan will identify two major concepts to demonstrate shortfalls. (1) Regional water resource strategies – research, public works and regulation for supporting water supply development; and (2) planning, design, construction of public or private facilities for water production, treatment and distribution for sale or end use.

Information on implementation of the plan was provided. House Bill 293 (2004) is a local government comp plan and must address water supply sources to meet existing and projected water use demands considering regional water supply plans. The water management district must conduct at least one workshop on modeling and technical data. The annual Department of Environmental Protection reports must include assessment of progress made in developing water supplies consistent with regional water supply plans.

The five year work plan is extensive. The plan must identify: projects that will provide water; how each will produce additional water for use; estimate quantity of water made available for use; and assess contribution of RWSP's in providing water to meet existing and projected reasonable beneficial use.

Questions on amending the five year plans was asked and answered. Rule adoption was discussed.

5. Overview of 2000 LWC Plan by Mark Elsner, Lead Planner, Water Supply, SFWMD.

Mr. Elsner provided an overview of the 2000 Lower West Coast Water Supply Plan. A chart showing a generalized cross-section of an aquifer was provided.

The process included major components such as water use assessment; analysis and issue identification; water source options; and conclusions/recommendations. The population in the Lower West Coast (LWC) was projected to increase by 70% through 2020; and agricultural acreage in the LWC was projected to increase by 10% through 2020. The methods and sources for analysis and issue identification were provided.

Several issues were identified, including limited expansion of freshwater aquifers; limited freshwater for irrigation; surface water availability in C-43 canal; and freshwater discharges to estuaries. There were eight water source options identified.

In conclusion, the needs of the region can be met with appropriate management and diversification of water supply sources. There were 29 recommendations made to develop the resources and contain regional and local responsibilities. Mr. Elsner highlighted some of the recommendations, including conservation; ground water resources; reclaimed water; storage, regional irrigation system, and many others.

Related strategies include incorporating assumptions into permitting; establishing minimum flows and levels for the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary, and Lower West Coast Aquifer System; and continuing wetland drawdown studies.

Ms. Ross provided information on reservations that will be in affect in the Lower West Coast. Some reservations will be in affect before the plan is complete.

6. Accomplishments of 2000 LWC Plan, by Linda Hoppes, LWC Project Manager, Water Supply, SFWMD.

Ms. Hoppes addressed the water development options. There are 29 recommendations in eight categories: conservation; ground water resources, reclaimed water, Regional Irrigation Distribution System (RIDS); seawater; storage; surface water; and related implementation strategies. The recommendations are the measuring devise for the accomplishments.

Information on the conservation efforts, alternative water supply funding program and the water savings incentive program [WaterSIP] was provided. Presentation contained information on the Conservation Ordinance and Education; and the urban and agricultural mobile irrigation labs program.

Groundwater resources are aquifer monitoring; aquifer rulemaking; and aquifer modeling. The District's Floridan Aquifer monitoring program has 10 new sites and this matter was reviewed.

Information on monitoring for saltwater intrusion and surface and groundwater modeling were included in the presentation. This region is a leader in the state of Florida in water reuse and reclaimed water. The regional irrigation distribution system (RIDS) was discussed.

Information was provided on a variety of important projects. These included the District and FPL cost sharing a feasibility study to investigate alternative source of potable water; 29 aquifer storage and recovery projects in the Lower West Coast area; regional retention projects sponsored by the Big Cypress Basin; surface water; Caloosahatchee Basin C-43 Storage Project and ASR Pilot Project; Southwest Florida Feasibility Study; minimum flows and levels (MFLs); Floridan Well abandonment; related implementation strategies; wetland drawdown study; water use rule revisions; and additional information on minimum flows and levels.

Questions on the wetlands drawdowns study and MFLs were asked regarding the water table aquifer. Ms. Hoppes and Mr. Burns provided the information. Ms. Hoppes stated that the schedule for the water table aquifer MFL is 2006. Ms. Hoppes stated that information regarding the wetland drawdown study and the water permitting can be addressed at a future workshop.

7. Southwest Florida Feasibility Study (SWFFS) Overview, Status and Linkage with LWC, by Janet Starnes, Regional Project Manager, Southern District Restoration Department, SFWMD.

There were three different authorizations – 1992, 1996 and 2000. Key issues are: adequate water supply for agriculture, environmental, and urban needs; balance economic growth with environmental needs; flood protection; flow-way restoration; freshwater flows/discharges to estuaries; water quality; and wetland impacts.

There were several project objectives explained by Ms. Starnes. The project summary provided information on the 50/50 cost share between the District and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. There is only funding for the study. Predevelopment vegetation maps have been completed. The regional simulation model is under development. The four sub-regional hydrologic models are under development. The 2000 land use map is completed. The 2050 demand projections and land use map is being developed, with projections estimated to be completed in August or September of 2004. The water quality assessment data has been completed. The ecologic-estuarine performance measures and targets were identified. The hydrologic-identified for stage, flow, and duration are complete.

Ms. Starnes provided the major milestones from January 2001 through April 2008.

Brief discussion regarding the current grid size in models.

8. Water Supply Program 10-Year Strategic Plan, by John Mulliken.

Mr. Mulliken presented information on the Strategic Plan and the programs in that Plan.

The SFWMD Governing Board priorities are to build three reservoirs through public/private partnerships; achieve Everglades water quality standards; acquire land for Kissimmee River restoration; reduce phosphorus inputs to Lake Okeechobee; refurbish the regional flood control system; implement water supply plan recommendations; and continue to recognize the value of employees.

The Coastal Watershed Program 10 year strategic goals include:

- Restore watersheds and estuaries through local initiatives;
- Understand restoration effects through high quality applied science; and
- Decrease flood damages through proactive flood management planning.

The CERP program 10 year strategic goal is to restore, preserve and protect South Florida's ecosystem while providing for other water-related needs of the region, including water supply and flood protection.

The SFWMD Everglades Program for the 10 year strategic goals are to contribute to Everglades restoration by restoring water quality, restoring hydrology and improving planning and operational decisions through applied science.

Information on the Kissimmee Restoration 10 year strategic goals are to restore the ecological integrity of the Kissimmee River flood plain ecosystem; improve water quality, water supply, natural resources and flood control levels; and regulation of the headwater and river system.

Also, the Lake Okeechobee Restoration Program 10 year strategic goals are to improve the health of the Lake Okeechobee ecosystem by improving water quality; reducing exotic species; and better managing Lake levels.

The Land Stewardship Program 10 year strategic goals are to restore conservation and preservation lands to a natural condition, provide compatible public access, and manage and acquire lands for other programs prior to their intended use.

The Regulation Program 10 year strategic goals are to provide fair, consistent and timely review of permit applications; ensure compliance with issued permits; and take enforcement action where necessary.

Operations and Maintenance Program 10 year strategic goals are to optimally operate and maintain the primary flood control and water supply system.

The goals will be posted on the District web page at the WRAC website and Water Supply Plan website.

A description of the Water Supply Program was provided. The program's mission is to develop and implement 20 year plans to address existing and future water supply needs; support local government comprehensive planning; and ensure continued consistency of water use permitting with environment protection and restoration. The

goals and strategies of the program were outlined. Information on the key assumptions was provided.

The future water supply funding was explained, including maintaining a minimum of \$4.5 million a year for alternative water supply grants; and establishing \$5 million a year additional funding to implement water supply plan recommendation.

Information on the project lists was provided by Mr. Mulliken. Question regarding the minimum flows and levels on Lake Okeechobee and proposal to reexamine the WSE schedule was asked and Mr. Mulliken provided information.

On June 28, 2004 there will be a WRAC Issues Workshop on Lake Okeechobee at the B1 Auditorium, District Headquarters.

Data on minimum flows and levels for Estero Bay was provided by Mr. Mulliken.

9. Distribute Draft *Consolidated Water Supply Support Document* by Linda Hoppes.

Ms. Hoppes provided information on the document referenced above. This is a single universal document for all four of the District's regional water supply plans. Curt Thompson is the project manager at SFWMD on this project and he can be contacted at cthomp@sfwmd.gov with any comments or questions regarding this document. All the information presented today will be posted on the website.

A link to that material will be placed on the WRAC website.

10. Public Comment.

Susan Scott, City of Cape Coral, resident of Ft. Myers, spoke on water reservation for the Caloosahatchee River. Mr. Mulliken and Ms. Starnes provided information on water reservations and Ms. Starnes said there will be reservations established before 2006. Ms. Scott said this way, way behind – 4 years overdue. She addressed the “public demands” and “public needs”. Water conservation and reuse of water are two important issues of concern to Ms. Scott. The water demand and waste of water is important and there is a great waste. The environment comes first and everyone should cut back by 10%.

Mr. Mulliken spoke on “demands” for water and explained the District's viewpoint. More water conservation programs are needed. The best investment is to make the best use of the water that is available.

Public Comment:

Tom Missinu, representing Collier County, Fort Myers, Florida, spoke on TMDL coordination with reservations; as well as distilled water, and the flood control system.

Public Comment:

Jim Beever, Fish & Wildlife Commission, North Golden Gate Estates, Punta Gorda, FL, spoke on water use, variable uses, and figures in the documents. He questioned how the figures were obtained and domestic self-supply of water. He stated that this is a huge potential water use and how this is being predicted needs to be improved. Agricultural use of water on crops and projected demands – actual permitted figures for potential use was requested. The data is needed in order to know what the estimated demands will be. The area of South Golden Gate Estates and how this area will be looked at in the Plans and the water supply needs was discussed.

Domestic self-supply information was talked about and information on population and demand projects will be discussed at the next meeting.

Kim Dryden of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Naples, Florida spoke on domestic self water supply; actual permitted water use; role of CERP projects in the Plan; water table aquifer MFL; and wetlands drawdown study.

Jim Beever, Fish & Wildlife Commission, spoke of the reorganization of the Fish & Wildlife staff. There will be issue teams established. The water that comes down the Caloosahatchee involves both the Lower West Coast Water Supply Plan and the Lower East Coast Water Supply Plan. This issue may be addressed at a future meeting.

11. Schedule for Next Workshop. Mr. Mulliken said the meeting will take place in the early fall and an announcement will be sent to all interested parties.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Trudi Williams
Chair – LWCRWSP

Paula Moree
Staff Business Operations Analyst